

TAX BOARD WARNS PROPERTY OWNERS OF "TAX REDUCERS"

Trickery Being Practised by
Firms That Know Sched-
ules Will Be Lower.

FOR CONTINGENT FEES

Fraud Is Exposed, but How
Many Victims Will Be
Caught?

"Ware the professional tax reducer!
To-day the Board of Taxes and As-
sessments warns property owners
that there are firms receiving contin-
gent retainers based on a reduction of
taxes from the 1915 figures.

In certain sections of Manhattan, it
is explained by the Tax Department
officials, the Deputy Tax Commis-
sioners are making up their schedules
of values for 1915 on a lower basis
than that of 1914. This is being done
as a result of careful investigation of
market conditions, showing where
real estate values have actually de-
preciated. The reductions are made
in spite of the professional tax re-
ducer and not because of him, it is
contended.

The Tax Department warning says:
"Certain firms that specialize in se-
curing a reduction of assessed values
have taken advantage of the market
conditions in the sections referred to
and evidently have secured contingent
retainers based on reductions."

Claiming to have received a letter
from the Tax Department asking for
such information, one firm submitted
written suggestions and data regard-
ing various properties in Manhattan.
The Tax Department replied, denying
that there was any record of previous
correspondence.

"There is no record in the depart-
ment of any communication to you
committing it to the reception of any
suggestions," wrote Secretary C.
Rookland Tyns. "The papers you
sent to the department are returned
to you herewith for the reason that
the department is unwilling to re-
ceive from persons who make a busi-
ness of procuring taxpayers to apply
for reduction of assessments, any
written or other matter which may
be used as the basis for a claim for
having procured a reduction of the
assessed values."

This letter, with the package con-
taining sheets of data referred to by
the firm that wrote the Tax Depart-
ment, was sent to the office of the
firm by special messenger. Receipt
was refused. Secretary Tyns says he
then sent the package and letters by

registered mail, but it was returned
to the Post Office as undelivered.
The Tax Department says that very
likely when the reduced assessed
values are made public, Oct. 1, many
property owners will receive bills
from professional tax reducers for
services rendered, notwithstanding
the efforts of officials to protect them
from such practice.

"Under the circumstances," the
warning concludes, "a property owner
would make no mistake should he
refuse to pay the bill sent him by
the professional tax reducer."

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